

African Wildlife Foundation's AFRICAN LANDSCAPE

2015.ISSUE 1



After she survived an attack by poachers in 2012, Thandi the rhino became symbolic of the cruelties of the illicit wildlife trade. In January, she gave birth to a calf.

Frances Van Pletzen / Kariega Game Reserve

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A Clear Need for Urgent Action

Due to the illegal wildlife trafficking crisis, mortality rates for Africa's elephants and rhinos are now exceeding their natural birth rates. Research published in 2014 in the *Proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences* found that some 100,000 African elephants, for example, were poached due to ivory demand between 2010 and 2012—on the order of 33,000 elephants each year.

Two years ago, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) launched the Species Protection Grants (SPG) programme to increase its efforts against wildlife poaching and trafficking. The programme provided grants of between US\$50,000 to US\$300,000 to established partners on the ground to support their wildlife protection efforts. Funds are typically used to purchase equipment that aid in anti-poaching work, such as GPS units and motorbikes, and to support rangers on the ground.

Through the SPG effort, AWF has disbursed almost US\$1.5 million in funding and is protecting some 20 distinct populations of elephants, rhinos, carnivores and great apes in East, West, Southern and Central Africa. The nature of this crisis, however, requires even more substantial efforts to counter the decline of Africa's most iconic megafauna.

In response, AWF launched the Urgent Response Fund in the first quarter of 2014.

The Urgent Response Fund commits US\$10 million to combat the wildlife trafficking crisis—the same amount of money initially committed by the world's two largest economies, the United States and China, to battle the problem. Funding is being released over three years, along three primary areas:

- **Stop the Killing.** AWF is providing partners protecting critical populations of elephant, rhino, large carnivore and great ape with anti-poaching support.
- **Stop the Trafficking.** AWF is devoting resources to improving interception of illegally trafficked wildlife products at ports and successfully prosecuting wildlife criminals.
- **Stop the Demand.** AWF's demand reduction campaign with WildAid and partners, which initially focused on China and Vietnam, is expanding to Hong Kong and Thailand.

AWF plans to continue the Urgent Response Fund until current population declines stop and reverse. "My hope is that in one to two years, we will no longer have a crisis," says Philip Muruthi, AWF's senior director of conservation science.

Learn more about the Urgent Response Fund, and AWF's activities against illegal wildlife trafficking, on page 5.



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African Wildlife Foundation's
AFRICAN LANDSCAPE



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Celebrating Wins, Addressing Emergencies

As 2015 gets fully underway, I am happy to report that both AWF and African conservation had a number of important wins in 2014. In June, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) designated the Okavango Delta as the 1,000th World Heritage site. It is always gratifying to have our beautiful continent recognised for its natural wonders.

Recognising the need to continue protecting these very important sites, even after designation, AWF has been involved in conservation work this past

Programme, AWF's Urgent Response Fund is already giving us some wins, with lowered poaching rates in sites such as Lower Zambezi National Park in Zambia, Manyara Ranch Conservancy in Tanzania and more.

In fact, in Kenya, AWF learned last year that as a direct result of the magistrate training that we conducted with our partners, including Kenya Wildlife Service, earlier this year, one magistrate gave a poacher a Ksh 20 million fine, while another in Kajiado County just sentenced a different poacher to seven years in jail. I encourage



“Illegal wildlife trafficking continues to be a prominent issue in Africa and around the world”

year around a couple of World Heritage Sites in Danger (as well as sites in danger of being moved to that list). Funding through UNESCO is allowing AWF to continue that work in Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia and Dja Faunal Reserve in Cameroon (see page 7).

With UNESCO funding, AWF also undertook a project in late 2014 to select natural sites in South Sudan that may be worthy of future World Heritage designation. With our work with Nimule National Park, as well as a new project that started in the Imatong Mountains (see pages 8 – 9), we were well placed to provide such an evaluation.

Continued trafficking

Illegal wildlife trafficking continues to be a prominent issue in Africa and around the world. AWF earlier this year launched the Urgent Response Fund to channel even greater resources toward this crisis than before (see our cover story). On top of our two-year-old Species Protection Grants

you to read about some of our other work on page 5, then follow that with the Q&A we conduct with one of our critical on-the-ground partners in the transborder Kenya-Tanzania region, Big Life Foundation (see page 10).

The conservation world seems to be enjoying more of these wins with regard to this crisis, which is heartening. But new challenges will come up, as they always do. AWF will remain proactive in our efforts to protect Africa's natural heritage, and we look forward to working with partners such as you in 2015 to achieve even more wins for conservation. Now more than ever, effective partnerships are needed, and we welcome this.

Daudi Sumba
Vice president for programme design
and government relations



Eliminating the bushmeat trade could minimise Ebola epidemics among people

In the Fight Against Africa's Bushmeat Trade

By Yao Bongoma *Communications officer, Congo landscape*

Whilst a large part of the world was holding its breath at the news of an Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014, AWF was continuing its implementation of the Central Africa Forest Ecosystems Conservation (CAFEC) project in the Maringa–Lopori–Wamba (MLW) Landscape in central Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. (See “A Cohesive Strategy to Conserve the Congo Basin,” *African Landscape*, Issue 2014.1.)

In late August 2014, however, work in MLW was affected when the DRC Ministry of Health notified the World Health Organisation of an Ebola outbreak in Equateur Province, where MLW landscape is located.

In MLW, local communities regularly buy and sell bushmeat, with little awareness of the risks. “There is evidence that humans can contract Ebola from bushmeat consumption,” says Charly Facheux, AWF vice president for conservation projects, who until recently led AWF’s Congo landscape work. According to the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, in fact, the index case in Equateur was a pregnant woman who had butchered a bush animal.

Ensuing virological analysis isolated the DRC Ebola outbreak from West Africa as a separate strand of the serious disease, which can be fatal for humans and other primates such as monkeys, gorillas and chimpanzees. AWF operated with a skeleton staff and postponed trips into the field until late September, when the Congolese government announced the outbreak was nearly over.

1.7 million tonnes

In the mitigation of biodiversity threats, the bushmeat trade poses a very real threat. Close to 1.7 million tonnes of bushmeat are collected annually around the world, according to a 2011 report from the UN Environment Programme. To counter this issue in MLW, AWF has established a bushmeat trade observatory and discussed with stakeholders results from a market survey it conducted. AWF has also been rehabilitating a community radio station in the rural Equateur town of Djolu, where messages about the risks of consuming bushmeat and its effects on wildlife and other aspects of conservation will be broadcast. ■

IN BRIEF

- > AWF hired Dr. Alistair Pole, who has significant experience in ranch and land management, as its director of land conservation. Pole is based out of AWF’s office in Harare, Zimbabwe.
- > Twenty-four new ecoguards graduated in the second half of 2014 (below) and began work in the Lyondji Community Bonobo Reserve. AWF staff provided supplemental training on ecological monitoring to the guards in October 2014.
- > AWF hired a new project manager, Zeleke Abuhay, to oversee conservation efforts in Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia.
- > As part of its restoration work in the Enderit block of the Mau Forest Complex, AWF planted 375,000 indigenous tree seedlings during 2014, with an expected survival rate of 85 per cent.
- > AWF is working with the Zimbabwe Parks and Management Authority on the development of a General Management Plan for Hwange National Park.
- > A number of AWF staff attended the Congo Basin Forest Partnership meeting in Congo–Brazzaville in October 2014. AWF’s vision for the Congo Basin can be found at awf.org/congo-basin
- > Groundbreaking began on construction of the Limalimo Lodge, an ecolodge in the Simien Mountains of Ethiopia financed by AWF subsidiary African Wildlife Capital.
- > At the President’s Advisory Council on Combating Wildlife Trafficking in October 2014, AWF provided expert testimony on the illegal great ape pet trade.
- > Through its African Apes Initiative, AWF started work with partners on a new chimpanzee survey in Senegal.
- > AWF signed an MOU with Ezemvelou Kwa Zulu Natal to collaborate on species protection, community conservancies and capacity building.



Jeff Dupain

Twenty-four new ecoguards began work in the Lyondji Community Bonobo Reserve in 2014.

AWF's Congo ecologist, Nakedi Maputla, (left) and former Samburu ecologist, Ann Nyambura, were among the participants in the Kolo Hills forests ecological survey.



Ecological Survey in Tanzania Sets Stage for Climate Change Validation

By Nakedi Maputla *Ecologist, Congo landscape*

In the Kondo District of north-central Tanzania, the Kolo Hills Forests sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and are the source of the Tarangire River, which sustains Tarangire National Park and provides fresh water to surrounding communities. In 2010, AWF embarked on a climate change mitigation and adaptation project to conserve these forests, with support from the Norwegian Agency for Development cooperation (Norad). The project, aimed at exploring a potential payment for ecosystem scheme through the Reduced Emissions From Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) programme, involves 19 villages and spans approximately 71,632 hectares. The area comprises six strata, ranging from Miombo woodland forest to savanna and crop land.

Collaborative effort

To assess the ecosystem functionality of the Kolo Hills Forest—and as part of our efforts for REDD+ validation under the Plan Vivo scheme, which emphasises biodiversity and community factors—AWF conducted a baseline biodiversity study in September 2014. The survey targeted trees, plus birds, mammals and arthropods found in the area.

Several AWF staff led the exercise alongside botanists and entomologists from the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (or TAWIRI), Tanzania Forestry Service, Tropical Pesticide Research Institute, Tanzania's Wildlife Division, scientists from the Kondo District Council and village forest scouts. AWF incorporated community participation, particularly through the Inter Village Forest Management Council. AWF staff participating included ecologists from the Congo, Samburu and Kilimanjaro landscapes; a GIS specialist from AWF headquarters; and the Kolo Hills project manager, among others. [EDITOR'S NOTE: The author of this article was the lead ecologist on the survey.]

To conduct the botanical, bird and large mammal surveys, teams of between 5 and 7 people walked west-east transects, setting up 20 m x 20 m sampling quadrants every 500 m. Birds were observed and identified through binoculars (depending on the distance) and by their call sounds. Trees with greater than 20-cm diameter at breast height (or DBH) were identified and measured. There were six transects in all, spanning approximately 50 km.

For small mammals and arthropods, teams set trap arrays in different land-use and vegetation areas. Pitfall traps were used for arthropods while Sherman traps, baited with a mixture of oats, peanut butter and vanilla, were employed for small mammals.

Survey results suggest that Kolo Hills Forests are both species rich and diverse. For example, arthropod species encountered during the survey included 157 species of butterflies, 26 species of beetles and more. The survey yielded 143 bird species, including birds of prey such as the African crowned eagle, African harrier hawk and Augur buzzard.

Eight species of medium-sized and large mammals were identified during the survey. The largest mammal encountered was the lesser kudu; the largest carnivore signs found were of the spotted hyena. Participants observed nine species of small mammals, including rodents associated with Miombo woodland such as pygmy mouse and Kaiser's rock rat. Elephant shrews and pygmy mongoose were spotted while conducting reconnaissance around the trap arrays. With this survey, a threat analysis and community engagement in place, auditors conducted a validation visit in 2015 for eventual Plan Vivo validation. It is our hope that these efforts will yield benefits to the local community—thereby incentivising them to conserve the forests—and help with carbon sequestration. ■

> Urgent Response Fund coverage, continued

Species Protection Across the Continent

Under the Urgent Response Fund, AWF is protecting Africa's core wildlife species from poaching, including elephants, rhinos, large carnivores and great apes.

Following is a listing of some of the support AWF has provided across East, Southern, Central and West Africa, along with locations where support will soon be coming.



Elephants

1. Kafue National Park, Zambia

AWF's support of Lusaka-based Game Rangers International and the Zambia Wildlife Authority's (or ZAWA's) Intelligence and Investigations Unit is strengthening protection and security around Kafue National Park—Africa's second largest park—and netting a number of elephant poachers and traffickers throughout Zambia. In December 2014, the Intelligence and Investigations Unit arrested one of Interpol's "Most Wanted" environmental fugitives, Ben Simasiku, wanted for ivory trafficking. A number of other arrests have been made in the weeks since.

2. Amboseli Wildlife Corridor, Kenya

3. Bili-Uele Protected Area Complex, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

4. Dja Faunal Reserve, Cameroon

5. Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas, Central African Republic

6. Faro National Park, Cameroon

7. Kilimanjaro landscape, Tanzania

8. Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia

9. Makgadigadi National Park, Botswana

10. Manyara Ranch Conservancy, Tanzania

11. Ruaha-Rungwa ecosystem, Tanzania



Carnivores

1. Ruaha Carnivore Project, Tanzania

Funding to the Ruaha Carnivore Project will provide camera traps to eight local villages to place in the best wildlife areas. Camera trap images will be shown to each village at a DVD night; those villages with the most carnivore photos will receive benefits such as school books and access to high-quality veterinary medicines. This effort is aimed at reducing the heavy human-carnivore conflict in the region.

2. Amboseli Wildlife Corridor, Kenya

3. Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme, Ethiopia

4. Ewaso Lions, Kenya

5. Kruger Leopard Project, South Africa

6. Mara Lion Project, Kenya

7. Tarangire Lion Project, Tanzania



Rhino

1. Hluhluwe-iMfolozi National Park, South Africa

AWF provided a grant to Ezmevelo KZN Wildlife in June 2013 to support its anti-poaching efforts in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi National Park in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. Rhino poaching has decreased by 25 per cent in Hluhluwe-iMfolozi between 2012 and 2013. AWF recently signed a new agreement with Ezmevelo KZN Wildlife to establish a mobile ranger force that will help protect parks in the entire province.

2. Great Fish River Nature Reserve, South Africa

3. Mosi-oa-Tunya, Zambia

4. Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary, Kenya

5. Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya

6. Sabi Sand Wildtuin, South Africa

7. Save the Rhino Trust, Namibia

8. Save Valley Conservancy, Zimbabwe



Great Apes

1. Congo landscape, DRC

2. Community Natural Reserve of Dindéfelo, Senegal

3. Campo Ma'an National Park, Cameroon

4. Dja Faunal Reserve, Cameroon

5. Idanre Forest, Nigeria

6. Niger Delta, Nigeria

7. Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal



Shana Laurisen

AWF's Central Africa engagement will expand our species work to western lowland gorillas as well as forest elephants and other wildlife.

the endangered bonobo and establishing two protected areas, Lomako–Yokokala Faunal Reserve and the Iyondji Community Bonobo Reserve. We have also initiated a new programme in elephant and chimpanzee conservation in the Bili-Uele Protected Area Complex, located in northern DRC. AWF is establishing permanent conservation presence with ICCN to secure the area.

Meanwhile, in Cameroon, AWF is supporting the Ministry of Forest and Fauna in conducting anti-poaching and ecological monitoring in the Dja Faunal Reserve. We

have additionally launched an anti-poaching programme with GIZ in Bouba N'djida National Park. Over the next five years, AWF will continue to work in and expand upon all of these programmes.

AWF is also working to establish presence and programmes in Campo Ma'an National Park and Ebo/Ndokbou Complex, both in Cameroon.

Work with local partners

In each of these areas, AWF works with the local government authorities and partners. We will focus on improving the management of the protected areas through proper planning, capacity building and provision of equipment; engaging the local communities in conservation and enterprise opportunities; and developing a sustainability plan that will ensure the long-term economic, ecological and social sustainability of these protected areas. Other activities will include great ape and elephant conservation; stemming the bushmeat trade; protecting the forest through REDD+; and more.

The existing and proposed work in DRC would be supported from AWF's office in Kinshasa. The existing and proposed work in Cameroon would be supported through a proposed new country office in Yaounde.

We are eager to apply our skills and expertise and conservation best practices across Central Africa to increase land under conservation, improve management of conservation areas, protect wildlife and improve the lives of people living with wildlife. ■

AWF to Expand Engagement in Central Africa

By **Kathleen H. Fitzgerald** *Vice president, conservation strategy*

Spanning 11.5 million km², Central Africa is an expansive region that most notably contains the second-largest tropical rainforest in the world. The Congo Basin forest, measuring 200 million hectares, accounts for 30 per cent of the plant cover on the African continent, is a critically important carbon sink and is home to endemic, threatened and endangered species, including four of the world's six great ape species.

The primary ecological threats to this region are deforestation, forest degradation and wildlife poaching. While the region hosts a number of protected areas, protected area authorities lack the capacity—both financial and human—to effectively and efficiently manage these conservation areas. Adding to these threats is the high level of poverty and food insecurity amongst the local population.

Building on prior successes

AWF has been working in the region for more than 20 years. In the Virunga landscape spanning Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda, for example, AWF was a partner in the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP). IGCP and other partners were able to increase the mountain gorilla population by 12 per cent since 1997, implement ranger-based monitoring and protection systems, and establish two high-end, community-owned tourism lodges. (Our operating agreement with IGCP ended in 2014.)

In the Maringa–Lopori–Wamba (MLW) landscape in DRC, AWF has been working with remote rural communities to decrease overreliance on the forest, in the process protecting

With UNESCO Support, AWF Work at World Heritage Sites Continues

When the Okavango Delta earlier this year became the 1,000th property to be named a World Heritage Site by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), it was cause for celebration by many involved in African conservation.

During that same session, however, Selous Game Reserve in Tanzania was moved to the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger—underscoring the fact that many African Natural World Heritage Sites face conservation challenges, even after World Heritage designation and the protections and support that come with such a designation. Africa has the dubious distinction of being the continent with the most properties on the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger.

AWF is working in two World Heritage Sites in Danger, Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia and Niokolo-Koba National Park in Senegal. AWF developed a tourism plan for Simien and has begun implementation of a suite of activities aimed at improving park management, including providing training for trekker guides earlier this year. In Niokolo-Koba, AWF staff trained park authorities in the use of the CyberTracker handheld ecological monitoring device.

AWF provided similar ecological monitoring support last year to Cameroon's Dja Faunal Reserve, a World Heritage Site that, without intervention, has the potential of being moved to the list of Sites in Danger. AWF is scaling up programmes in each of these three sites.

New World Heritage funding

In 2014 AWF received funding through the World Heritage Committee to

embark on additional work in two of these World Heritage properties.

In Simien, UNESCO funding will allow AWF to work with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) to develop a grazing strategy aimed at better overall grazing management. The new strategy—which will be completed in close coordination with EWCA, local communities and a diversity of key stakeholders—will create zones for different grazing densities. Livestock grazing is one of the biggest threats to the park, and EWCA has committed to addressing this and other threats to get Simien removed from the World Heritage Sites in Danger list.

“AWF is grateful for the support provided by UNESCO, as this funding will help ensure that Simien Mountains National Park is better managed and can be removed from the Sites in Danger list,” says Kathleen Fitzgerald, vice president for conservation strategy at AWF.

Work will also continue in Dja. “We will continue to implement the CyberTracker, together with SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool), for better anti-poaching and ecological monitoring in Dja,” says Jef Dupain, technical director for West and Central Africa.

Dja is one of three World Heritage Sites that make up a network of protected areas and forest landscapes in the Cameroon-Gabon-Congo-Central African Republic transborder zone. WWF, Wildlife Conservation Society and the Sangha Tri-National Foundation are implementing the second phase of the Central African World Heritage Forest Initiative (CAWHFI) here, funded by the World Heritage Committee. By agreement with UNESCO, the grantees

have agreed to award a subgrant to AWF to work in Dja. Under the grant, AWF will revise Dja's general management plan and ensure effective anti-poaching efforts that will protect the reserve's population of chimpanzees and gorillas—designated a priority population in International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN's) Central Africa great ape conservation plans—and its forest elephant population. AWF's Urgent Response Fund recently approved a Species Protection Grant to protect Dja's forest elephant population, further supplementing the work to be undertaken by the CAWHFI grant. AWF also awarded a grant to WWF for elephant protection in Sangha.

In further recognition of AWF's current and potential future contributions to protecting African Natural Heritage Sites, UNESCO has also awarded AWF a short-term consultancy to prepare a list of sites in South Sudan for potential World Heritage consideration. (Read about AWF's other work in South Sudan on pages 8 – 9.)

“There is unanimous agreement among the African conservation groups that African World Heritage Sites are in special need of increased support,” says Senior Programme Design Director Karen Ross, who is in discussions with other Africa-based groups about forming an informal coalition of NGOs that could provide support to African Natural World Heritage Sites. “An African World Heritage NGO Network would allow groups to share best practices and coordinate efforts at World Heritage Sites where possible. It will also provide a stronger and more unified voice of civil society to address the World Heritage Committee about the issues facing African properties.” ■

AWF's involvement with World Heritage Sites includes Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia.

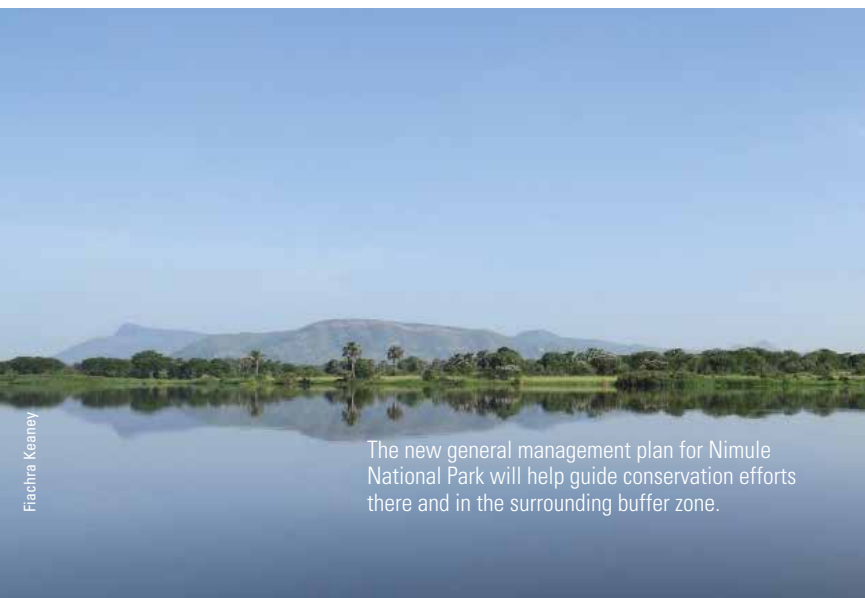
AWF Helps S. Sudan Develop 1st Approved General Management Plan

In November 2012, the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism of South Sudan requested that AWF visit Nimule National Park to assess an uncompleted government lodge and recommend its tender for outside investors. Among other matters, AWF recommended the development of a General Management Plan (GMP) for Nimule and the adjacent buffer zone. An MOU signed between AWF and the Ministry in January 2013 outlined how AWF would assist the government of South Sudan in wildlife conservation and tourism. Development of the GMP for Nimule and the buffer zone became one of the first tasks to be tackled under this partnership.

Nimule National Park is a small, narrow picturesque park situated in the south part of South Sudan. It covers an area of 254 km² with a buffer zone of 154 km², and boasts a topography of hills and low-lying areas dissected by seasonal streams and perennial rivers and streams. The Nile River, which marks the eastern boundary of the park, is an important feature in the landscape. The dominant wildlife species in the park are elephants, which number about 150. The park is the only place in South Sudan where elephants are easily seen. The park is also an Important Bird Area.

The planning process for the GMP began in May 2013 and finished in June 2014. The process, which followed a participatory approach, was steered by an eight-member team consisting of representatives from the Ministry, the tourism sector, local communities, park management and AWF personnel. The completed GMP articulates the purpose of the park and buffer zone, the exceptional resource values therein and the zonation scheme with limitations of use. The plan prescribes actions in the areas of conservation and ecology management; community partnership and livelihood management; park operations, administration and infrastructure management; and tourism management.

The draft GMP was first presented to the Ministry in July 2014 and received overwhelming support from both the Ministry and stakeholders. It was officially signed by the Ministry in November 2014—South Sudan's first-ever approved general management plan. ■



The new general management plan for Nimule National Park will help guide conservation efforts there and in the surrounding buffer zone.



Charles Laku Lusio

The Imatong Mountains serve as an important water tower and are the headwater to the Kinyeti River, which flows north and feeds into the Kud wetlands.

Watershed Management Project Begins in Imatongs

By **Per Karlsson** *Programme design officer, East Africa*

AWF has started one of its newest projects, in the world's youngest nation, the Republic of South Sudan. Despite an uneasy start—ink on AWF's contract with the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Juba had hardly dried before the war-torn country plunged into another conflict in December 2013—AWF's implementation of the five-year-long Improving the Integrated Watershed Management of the Imatong Mountains project is now underway.

The Imatong Mountains rise spectacularly over the plains of Torit and Ikotos Counties in Eastern Equatoria State on South Sudan's southern border to Uganda. The mountains serve as an important water tower and are the headwater to the Kinyeti River, which flows north and feeds into the Kud wetlands between Bandingilo National Park and Mongalla Game Reserve. While most of the charismatic megafauna, including elephants, are no longer found in the mountains, the critical habitat is still intact and the area still holds significant biodiversity values. It is, for example, one of the richest bird areas in Africa.

The Imatong Mountains are a prominent feature in the transboundary Kidepo landscape, where AWF works on the Uganda side. With this first project on the South Sudanese side of the border, AWF seeks to improve the management of the Imatong water tower

through participatory land-use planning and natural resource management, forest protection and the provision of sustainable agricultural livelihoods. This will secure the long-term sustainability of the Imatong water tower and its ecosystem services. If successful, this work will also contribute to local economic development and security in Eastern Equatoria State.

Baseline surveys

Charles Laku Losio, an experienced South Sudanese formerly with the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife Management and Tourism, will oversee the project for AWF. Losio has set up a field office in Torit, and various baseline surveys have been conducted. These surveys have collected data on:

- The socioeconomic status of local communities;
- Agricultural value-chains;
- Status of water flows and forest cover;
- Land tenure systems; and
- Capacity needs of local stakeholders.

The survey outcomes helped AWF define entry points and the most urgent interventions for successful conservation of the Imatong Mountains. Now completed, AWF has started the implementation, which includes actions to create a national park in the Imatongs to ensure a lasting legacy for this new country. ■



Through regular patrols AWF and partner Big Life Foundation have brought down poaching in the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem.

Anti-Poaching in the Amboseli-Tsavo Ecosystem

Prior to 2010, the community areas in southern Kenya's Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem experienced high levels of poaching. AWF partnered with local NGO Big Life Foundation to train community scouts and establish cross-border anti-poaching operations to deter wildlife trafficking. Today, Big Life is supporting anti-poaching work in many of the conservancies AWF has worked with local communities to establish—including Rombo, Ole Narika, Osupuko, Nailepeau, Kilitome and Kitenden.

Richard Bonham, co-founder and director of operations at Big Life, recently received the Prince William Award for Conservation in Africa from HRH The Duke of Cambridge at the 2nd annual Tusk Conservation Awards. "Richard has dedicated his life to conservation and the Amboseli landscape in particular. This award is well-deserved recognition of Richard's tireless commitment to protecting Africa's natural heritage," notes Fiesta Warinwa, Kenya country director for AWF. Warinwa added that Big Life is a valuable and strong partner of AWF. "As conservation threats increase, these kinds of partnerships are even more important," she said.

AWF spoke with Bonham about how Big Life undertakes anti-poaching work in this cross-border region.

Q: What are the causes of the majority of poaching incidents here?

A: Man-related wildlife mortality here can be broken down into three main categories. International illegal wildlife trafficking drives elephant and rhino poaching, though we are also beginning to see

prices for lion and leopard skin and body parts rising... These are all driven from the Far East. In an alarming escalation,



Richard Bonham is co-founder and director of operations at Big Life Foundation in Kenya.

elephant in this area are also being killed or injured as a result of human-wildlife conflict. Bush meat hunting is mainly driven by poverty, though we can't really call it subsistence poaching, as it is a business with commercial gangs doing the harvesting.

Q: How do you address this, then?

A: It's a combination of things. First, getting the communities living with this wildlife to have a sense of ownership and tangible benefits generated from them, like revenue streams and employment. This has to then be backed up by well-trained and -motivated ranger teams. The most effective route to catch poachers is intelligence. About 90 per cent of our prosecutions are intel-based.

Q: What challenges do community scouts face while on patrol?

A: Probably the greatest challenge is to

make sure they have the right equipment to undertake the patrol in the first place. AWF has funded ranger training and supplied crucial equipment like tents, sleeping bags, and torches—all the important cogs that keep the machine running.

Our rangers engage in two types of patrols. The routine patrol involves covering ground, showing your presence and looking for signs of poaching, whether it's a dead animal or poacher's tracks. The other kind of patrol is set in place for a reason, mostly as a result of information from an informer. Often these require the men to deploy at night and sit at our observation posts on the tops of hills waiting for something to happen.

Q: How is technology changing how your scouts work in the field?

A: Like most things in our modern world, we are making more use of technology to combat poaching. For example, we now have a digital radio network that tells us in real time where our vehicles and foot-based patrols are. GPSs are now standard equipment. Night-vision goggles are become more important—though we need more. We are working on introducing SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) monitoring in our patrols and a Web-based intelligence gathering protocol.

Q: How sophisticated is the equipment poachers are using?

A: We are fortunate in our area of operations that most of the poachers are still using traditional methods, such as snaring, poisoned arrows and spears. Even so, our rangers have been shot at with

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Diverse Trainees Promise a Dynamic Conservation Future

By Sarah Chiles *Conservation management trainee*

Participants in the Conservation Management Training Programme (CMT) are in many ways a collective reflection of what AWF aspires to for the future. This being the case, AWF's newest and third class of conservation management trainees, who started with AWF at the end of July, are an indication of an organisation with a dynamic, diverse and truly pan-African future.

The six participants, five of whom are women, have backgrounds and interests as diverse as climate change, environmental behaviour, human–carnivore conflict and environmental planning. They include:

- **Robina Abuja**, Kenya – Robina possesses a climate change background;
- **Muyang Achah**, Cameroon – Muyang has forestry experience;
- **Elizabeth Babalola**, Nigeria – Elizabeth has a passion for instituting environmental behaviour change;
- **Henriatha Che**, Cameroon – Henriatha has a degree in ecology and wildlife management;
- **Eric Reson**, Kenya – Eric is a wildlife biologist; and
- **Sylvia Wasige**, Kenya – Sylvia has done work in environmental planning.

Until late 2014, the trainees were based at AWF headquarters in Nairobi and moving through a series of interactive sessions with staff, small assignments and field trips to Samburu, Kilimanjaro and Maasai Steppe landscapes as part of their orientation process. This three-month period is often a whirlwind tour—a fast-tracked and holistic introduction to AWF's operations and organisational culture. The class was exposed to new conservation issues and encouraged to think about pragmatic conservation and problem-solving. Their challenge throughout the programme is to remain open to themes and topics beyond their usual areas of interest, while at the same time remaining true to themselves.

Growth trajectory

Speak to them now, and many of the new trainees will tell you that CMT is about acquiring more knowledge. This perspective will change.

The value of the programme, both for its participants and for AWF, lies not only in the knowledge it imparts but also in its provision of a platform for the cross-pollination of ideas. West and Central African culture meet East African culture in this new class. Whether in a formal session with a senior staff member or over lunch at a local restaurant, the trainees' interactions and exchange of ideas are integral to their development as holistic problem-solvers and conservationists. With six trainees and some strong personalities, the interactions will also be loud and lively, and the stories exchanged, diverse. These trainees are without a doubt infusing the organisation with new ideas and energy.

The programme's ultimate value, however, is that it gives its participants an opportunity to gain a greater sense of their



AWF is on its third year of the Conservation Management Training Programme. Pictured are trainees (front row, l–r) Sylvia Wasige and Robina Abuja from Kenya and Henriatha Che from Cameroon; plus (back row, l–r) Elizabeth Babalola from Nigeria, Sarah Chiles from South Africa, Eric Reson from Kenya and Muyang Achah from Cameroon.

unique positioning. I liken it a bit to the growth trajectory of some tropical forest tree species. There is the initial period of fast upward growth, which takes a sapling through the various levels of the understory. This growth is directed by light and reliant on nutrients and water; these inputs collectively enable a young tree to position itself in the canopy so that it can establish itself, grow wider and taller, and develop unique character.

In the same way, CMT is intended to provide all the right inputs to catalyse fast growth in its trainees, enabling them to establish themselves in the conservation sector and understand the roles that they can play as individuals in the African conservation landscape. At the end of the day, conservation practice is driven by personalities, people with sure-footedness about their purpose and what needs to be achieved. Thus the programme is as much about learning about oneself as it is about learning about conservation. CMT is developing more confident young conservationists—and that confidence will ultimately play out in effective conservation on the continent. ■

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rifles and poisoned arrows and attacked with machetes. Miraculously we have not lost any rangers in the line of duty.

Q: What characteristics do you look for in a scout?

A: We only recruit from the local community, which is probably our greatest asset. They are bush-savvy and know the country like the back of their hands. Being from the community also brings the benefit of knowing who is who—a huge advantage when it comes to following up on a poaching incident.

Over and above this, our best scouts have a sense of ownership of the wildlife they are protecting, which gives the job real meaning. Almost every day we have young warriors asking for a job as a community ranger. I wish we could employ them all.

Q: What do you emphasise during training?

A: Discipline is the backbone of a good scout. After that, we need to ensure they have a strong foundation in a number of skills: radio communication, first aid, wildlife law, interrogation, ambush procedures, and using cameras and GPS.

With new recruits, we usually attach them to an existing team where they do a kind of apprenticeship, learning the ropes. After that, we induct them into a one-month training course. This ideally is refreshed every 18 months.

Q: What have been the results of your work in this region with AWF?

A: In 2013, across the area we work with AWF, we only lost six elephants to poaching—which isn't bad considering that we look after about 2,000. Of those six lost, we made arrests in conjunction with four of the cases. ■

How AWF Approaches Conservation

AWF achieves conservation impact in Africa by focusing on high-priority, large landscapes that have the potential to conserve viable populations of African wildlife as well as key habitats and ecological systems well into the future.

These landscapes are composed of different land units—national parks, private land and community land—within a single ecosystem ranging in size from 7,000 km² to 95,000 km². Many extend across the borders of multiple countries.

Target landscapes are selected based on a detailed analysis that examines the region's biological, ecological, social and economic opportunities. AWF works closely with partners and stakeholders—including national and local governments, communities, research organisations, NGOs and the private sector—to

develop priority conservation actions specific to the area. AWF works in the following strategic areas: land conservation and management, species protection and conservation science, conservation enterprise and conservation schools. Policy, climate change, advocacy and capacity building are cross-cutting themes that underscore all of AWF's programmes. ■

